Recruitment of physical unfit in the army

1666. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether, during 1999-2000 and 2003-2004, 1608 recruits were declared medically fit at the time of their enrolment in the Army by Recruiting Medical Officers but were subsequently declared medically unfit during the second medical examination conducted at the Training Centres and 1083 out of 1608 recruits were invalidated on grounds of organic diseases and physical deformities which pre-existed even before enrolment;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons for not detecting the same by the RMO during recruitment; and

(c) whether the matter has been inquired into and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) There was no failure on the part of Regimental Medical Officers (RMOs) to carry out proper medical examination of recruits resulting in wasteful expenditure on their training and infractuous expenditure.

As per the revised recruitment policy effective from 1st April, 1998, recruitment in the Army is carried out through open rallies. The recruitment process starts with the preliminary screening of the aspiring candidates at the rally site followed by document checking and physical fitness test. Then medical examination of the aspiring candidates is conducted by Recruiting Medical Officers at the rally site. This is followed by a written examination for the medically fit candidates.

The recruitment medical examination at rally site is often conducted in sub optimal conditions, such as poor light, noise and insufficient power supply, where a number of disabilities could be missed. Many candidates, on the advice of private practitioners, are also known to take drugs which may mask symptoms of a disability. Some defects may have been in the nascent stage, which may have progressed in the 2-3 months intervening period between initial medical examination and second medical examination. Further, owing to Operation Vijay and Operation Parakram commitments, fewer number of Recruiting Medical Officers were available

for recruitment since their services were also required in the operational areas.

Each case of non-detection of a disease at the Recruiting Medical Examination is enquired into and suitable administrative/disciplinary action taken.

The newly posted Recruiting Medical Officers are being provided special training in Military Hospitals for conducting medical examination at recruitment rallies.

Steps to keep the army young

†1667. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the year 1985 a recommendation was made to this effect that the period of 17 years for the postings of 'fighter' soldiers at front be reduced to 7 years to keep the army 'young';

(b) whether it is also a fact that a suggestion was made to Government that after 7 years those soldiers be sent to the para-military forces;

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereon and the quantum of financial burden likely to be borne by the Government as a result thereof;

(d) by when a final decision will be taken by the Government in this regard; and

(e) the reasons for delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A Study was conducted in 1985, to explore the feasibility of reverting back to the pre January, 1965 status of 7 years colour service for Army personnel instead of 17 years introduced in June 1979 in order to realize a younger age profile in Combat Arms in the wake of intensive Counter Insurgency Operations.

(b) to (e) The Government is considering a proposal for lateral transfer of army personnel to Central Para Military Forces. The details/ modalities for lateral transfer are being worked out.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.